



GROUND COVER

NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP

JUNE 2013 VOLUME 4 ISSUE 6

\$1

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www.GroundcoverNews.org

IRS outrage is laughable in the face of true government failings



by Susan Beckett
Publisher

while. My thanks to those of you who expressed concern, but this is actually a move to ensure the ongoing health of the organization.

Another correction to the Observer article concerns a vendor, Greg O., who has now achieved economic independence and is employed driving a semi-truck cross country. He was very enterprising but there is no way he ever could have made \$1,600 in a day selling Groundcover. He never bought much more than 900 copies of Groundcover in a month, though it is possible that with generous tips he might have made \$1,600 in a single month.

I'd also like to apologize for any difficulty you encountered in trying to reach us in early May. We had issues with our phone at the same time as our email stopped working while we worked through the technical difficulties of switching over to our new website. Note that we now have an alternate phone number and emails are working again. Visit our website, www.groundcovernews.org, to keep abreast of meetings, events in the community, and other news.

Now, on to matters of state.

The furor over the attention the IRS paid to social welfare non-profits with political affiliations is astounding. The IRS scrutinized the application from Groundcover News, despite the fact that we were following a model they had already approved in dozens of other cities. It took more than a year, a minor change in a sub-sub category, and IRS fees of \$800 for the IRS to approve Groundcover for tax-exempt status. My guess is that the keyword “newspaper” triggered their vigilance. It is perfectly consistent that political keywords should trigger extra attention since the Citizen's United ruling allowed a subset of such groups to collect

money for certain political purposes without revealing their donors. The IRS was charged with determining whether the charter of each group was consistent with the newly interpreted law.

It is unreasonable, however, to expect the IRS to pour the same amount of resources into all applications, especially as their budget was reduced while the number of applications they had to process increased. The fees they charge non-profits are already burdensome for a start-up, at least for those without big money behind them. With the cuts from sequestration (the across-the-board cuts now in effect since Congress has not been able to pass a balanced budget that incorporates an intelligent mix of strategic cuts and tax increases), we can expect more corner-cutting from all of our national agencies.

I am much more concerned about how these cuts will affect the agencies charged with safeguarding our food, safety and vulnerable citizens. Where is the outrage over the four- to 21-billion-dollar cuts to SNAP (food stamps) that Congress has underway? Who is making a fuss over the homeless families who were promised housing vouchers that would subsidize their rent and get them housed, only to have their vouchers revoked due to sequestration? According to the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, 140,000 fewer households will receive vouchers to help them afford decent housing, 2,679 of them in Michigan.

How about the seniors who depend on the Meals on Wheels programs that have had to reduce their services? And the children who will not be able to attend Head Start because of cutbacks there? And the 75,500 people with disabilities who will no longer receive services? And after the calls for action

following the mass shootings, how can we allow 373,000 adults and children with serious mental illness to lose access to treatment!

And this is all on top of the cuts that states have been forced to make to deal with reductions in the federal share of programs they administer. Reductions in benefits for the long-term unemployed averaged \$120. This will eventually affect 3.8 million workers. These are families that have likely already exhausted their savings, sold most of their assets, and have to now rely on the shredded safety net.

Nearly 25 percent of all Michiganders are now living in poverty; 17,400 of them will lose nutrition aid reserved for pregnant women, infants and young children.

Congressional outrage is disingenuous, unreasonable and self-serving. If they want first-class services provided, they had better be prepared to fund them.

Oh wait, they have the power to undo the effects of cuts that affect them. Remember the quick action to reverse the reductions in air traffic controllers that caused flight delays in major airports? Members of Congress fly weekly and quickly directed the FAA to find another way to absorb their cuts.

Now they are lambasting the IRS for inconveniencing their major donors. So it seems that only ordinary Americans are to be inconvenienced – when they travel this summer and can't access portions of the National Parks, or when it reaches the end of the month and there is no food on the table.

GROUNDCOVER

Volunteer meeting!
June 12, 7-8:30 p.m.

Bethlehem United Church of Christ

DDA a Fiefdom?

Dear Editor,

The Downtown Development Authority is a quasi-official business advocacy group. (All their money is subtracted from other community services.) None of the records or projects of this group are open to citizen input. Although they do help fund some community groups, they behave like feudal overlords of the Middle Ages, picking winners and losers. To remain a free society, America must strive to heal the growing gap between “haves” and the “have nots.”

Sincerely,
Paul Lambert

Gathering Up the Gifts



by Rev. Dr. Martha
Brunell
Groundcover
Contributor

Today I write this column in the early morning of Pentecost, the third great holiday in the Christian calendar. It is the least well-known of our holidays but one whose importance reaches across the centuries. On this fiftieth day after Easter, we acknowledge the promised arrival of the Spirit who guides, upholds, enlivens, and fills with joy, passion, and direction the gifts of who we are and what we have. These are gifts that strengthen our community and set us free to serve in the larger world. This is a day for noticing and blessing the particular gifts resident in any group.

I love Pentecost and the energy of the Spirit. This seems like a good time for me to notice and to ask for blessing around the assembled gifts that have made and will make Groundcover News happen. In fact, every day is good for such recognition. People come and go from any effort like this paper. And it is always amazing, at any time, to somehow have the combination of talent, willingness, and hard work that put out another issue.

There is such an array of gifts to name. Some of us write, edit, and do layout occasionally or month after month. We are grateful to the organizers who collect various loose ends and keep tasks moving forward. When times are challenging, blessed are those who are persistent and stubborn and won't give up no matter how hard it gets.

Could we get along without the senses of humor and the funny stories that shift the tone of a conversation or decision moment? I have long admired the grit of vendors out there on cold days and blazing hot days, continuing to invite people to purchase the paper even when many have just rushed by without a glance. One of my favorite observations about our vendors is the creativity with which they lug the papers around and display them.

We continually benefit from new suggestions, from those who bear the fresh ideas that enhance what Groundcover News is all about. There are the hundreds of people who buy the paper and those who are interviewed for articles. What about friends who conduct writing workshops and other supportive services? Groundcover News has advertisers, financial supporters, and a host of partners sharing efforts to address homelessness across Washtenaw County. Have you been to a meeting or other event when there has been a room well set-up and refreshments to enjoy? The list of gathered gifts goes on and on!

The questions the paper addresses are tough ones. There is always more work looming. Tempers are known to fray, and people do clash. In the middle of everything, it is important to take stock of all that has been assembled and is generously being offering. It is well for us to pay attention to what is possible as we do this together. The gifts gathered here through us are many. With them we can be community with one another for the wellbeing of a circle of people that stretches out far beyond us. Blessings!



Bethlehem United Church of Christ
423 S. Fourth Avenue, Ann Arbor, MI 48104
(between William and Packard)
www.bethlehem-ucc.org (734) 665-6149

Bethlehem Church is home for the Groundcover Office

Sundays:
8:30 am and 10:00 am ~ Worship
10:00 am ~ Church School
(Note June 9 ~ 10:00 am service only)

Upcoming Events:
June 1 ~ Rummage Sale 9am
June 9 ~ Bowling Fundraiser for Mission Trip
(Noon to 2:00 pm ~ Colonial Lanes)
June 28 ~ Parking Lot Pretzel Sale
Noon: \$5.00/6 pretzels or \$10.00/12 pretzels

an invitation to grow in spirit and serve with joy

June Calendar of Events

May 31 - June 2 – 7th Annual Ya'ssoo Greek Festival, 11 a.m. - midnight (5/31-6/1); noon-6 p.m. (6/2). All are welcome to this celebration of Greek culture, featuring Greek cuisine and live Greek music and dancing. \$3 adult admission; children under 12 are free. Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church, 3109 Scio Church Rd., Ann Arbor. More info: www.annarborgreekfestival.org, (734) 332-8200.

June 1 – 18th Annual African American Downtown Festival, 8 a.m. - 9 p.m. Free outdoor festival celebrating Ann Arbor's rich African-American history. Live music, food, kids' activities. Washtenaw County Courthouse, 101 E. Huron St., Ann Arbor. More info: (734) 222-3001.

June 1 – Sunday School Rummage Sale @ Bethlehem United Church of Christ, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Proceeds go toward building a sustainable water pump in Malawi through the charity Pump Aid. Bethlehem United Church of Christ, 423 S. 4th Ave., Ann Arbor. More info: www.facebook.com/BethlehemRummageSale.

June 4/11/18/25 – Tuesday Résumé Clinics, 9-11 a.m. Learn how to construct a résumé and receive professional advice and editing. Washtenaw County Michigan Works! Career Transition Center, Key Bank Building, 2nd Floor, 301 West Michigan Ave., Ypsilanti. More info: call (734) 544-6799; TDD (800) 649-3777.

June 9 – Grillin' for Food Gatherers 2013, 3-8 p.m. Annual fundraising event – a “picnic with a purpose” – celebrating Food Gatherers' “24-Carrot Year.” Proceeds enable FG to distribute more than 5.75 million pounds of food annually to 150 non-profit programs serving people in need in Washtenaw County. Grilled foods, silent auction and raffle, fun events for kids, free chair massages. Advance tickets are \$50 for adults, \$10 for kids (\$60/10 at the door). More info: www.foodgatherers.org, or call (734) 761.2795.

June 12 – Groundcover Volunteer Meeting, 7-8:30 p.m. Join in the production and distribution of Groundcover News. Bethlehem United Church of Christ, Room F1 (elevator to B), 423 S. 4th Ave., Ann Arbor. More info: contact@groundcovernews.com, or call (734) 972-0926.

June 14 – Growing Hope Monthly Community Potluck, 6-8:30 p.m. A monthly event to cultivate community and engage anyone interested in sustainable communities, urban

farming, and healthy food access. All are invited (including kids) to share in a meal and discussion with friends and neighbors. Please bring a dish to pass, and RSVP. Ypsilanti Public Library Downtown Branch, 922 West Michigan Ave., Ypsilanti. More info: www.growinghope.net, (734) 786-8401.

June 14 – 13th Annual Mayor's Green Fair on Main Street, 6-9 p.m. Downtown Ann Arbor will be open to pedestrians for entertainment, over 150 exhibits with local environmental information, and hands-on activities for youth. Downtown Main Street, Ann Arbor. More info: a2gov.org/green, (734) 794-6161 x 41602.

June 15 – Ann Arbor Summer Festival: Top of the Park kick-off, 5 p.m. - midnight. Live music and food. Ingalls Mall, 915 E. Washington St., Ann Arbor. More info: a2sf.org.

June 17/24 and July 1 – Ann Arbor Summer Festival: 33 1/3, 7-9 p.m. Readings from Continuum Books' 33 1/3 series of books about classic rock albums, followed by a guest DJ from WCBN FM mixing from the songbook of that evening's celebrated artist. Arbor Brewing Company features happy hour pricing all evening. Arbor Brewing Company, 114 E. Washington St., Ann Arbor. More info: www.arborbrewing.com, (734) 213-1393.

June 20 – Religious Action for Affordable Housing (RAAH) Annual Meeting, 6:30 - 8 p.m. Program features Jan Little from Michigan Ability Partners. St. Francis of Assisi Church, 2250 E. Stadium Blvd., Ann Arbor. More info: www.RAAH.org.

June 22-23 – Relay for Life of Ann Arbor, 10 a.m. Saturday – 10 a.m. Sunday. 24-hour fundraiser to celebrate the lives of people who have battled cancer, remember loved ones lost, and fight back against the disease. Family-friendly event featuring entertainment, live music, kids' activities, walking laps, and ceremonies. Washtenaw Community College, 4800 E. Huron River Dr., Ann Arbor. Sign up and donate at: relayforlife.org/annarbormi, (734) 973-3300.

June 25 – “Take a Chance Tuesday”: live & free music at The Ark, 7:30-10 p.m. Food Gatherers benefit concert featuring acclaimed Nashville-based singer-songwriter Holly Williams. The Ark, 316 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. Free; donations of nonperishable food items accepted. More info: www.theark.org, or call (734) 761-1451.

GROUNDCOVER MISSION:

Groundcover News exists to create opportunity and a voice for low-income people while taking action to end homelessness and poverty.

Susan Beckett, Publisher
contact@groundcovernews.com

Lee Alexander, Editor
c.lee@groundcovernews.com

Andrew Nixon, Associate Editor

Contributors

Martha Brunell

La Shawn Courtwright

Peggy Donham

Francesca Lupia

Susan Sabo

Lisa Sonnenburg

Letters to the Editor:
editor@groundcovernews.com

Story or Photo Submissions:
submissions@groundcovernews.com

Advertising:
contact@groundcovernews.com
www.groundcovernews.com

facebook.com/groundcover
423 S. 4th Ave, Ann Arbor
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Be the best father you know how to be



by La Shawn Courtwright
Groundcover Vendor

June is the month that most Americans celebrate and honor Father's Day. This is a wonderful event for those who have a father. There are a lot of people who don't have a dad, and Father's Day has a different meaning to them.

I often find myself smiling at other families that have the privilege of showing their fathers how much they appreciate them. Then there are times when I feel lonely, and I envy them for their being able to do so. This day can bring about many feelings for me. I want to share what Father's Day is like for me.

I usually ask myself what it would be like to be able to wake up and say to my dad, "Happy Father's Day!" To see his face when I say the words to him would give my heart joy. It is so endearing to me when I see other females that have good relationships with their fathers.

I want to take advantage of this opportunity to make some requests to the fathers who are not involved in their children's lives. For some fathers this may be a challenge if the relationship with the mothers of their children is strained in some way.

I believe that I would have benefited in my life if I would have had my dad around. There are a number of things I probably would have done differently. So please get involved in your children's lives.

It is quite obvious that children still grow up whether their dad is around or not. I often wonder, though, in what ways would my life be different if my father had been around? Would I have gone straight to college after graduation? Or what dating would have been like, having the direction of a man. Would I have chosen the people I chose to date? I will never know that.

I would like to know what it feels like to be able to call my dad in a crisis and have him come to my aid. We need our fathers to be there for us in times of need, whatever the situation may be.

I would feel uncomfortable at times when I was amongst my friends that had both parents. I felt like a part of me was missing and I was incomplete without a father in my life. I often rebelled against my mother because my father wasn't there. This did not bring my father back, and I made a lot of bad choices with that attitude.

A father is supposed to make you feel loved, safe, guide you, and be the strength in the family. A lot of fathers have to work long hours to support their families and cannot always be there. So when you are with your family and have rested after a hard day's work, make sure that you spend some time with them. We need more than just monetary support.

I know that every couple has its disagreements, and these can interfere with our everyday life. Learn to work things out so that the children aren't the ones to suffer. I'm speaking of the differences that come up about how to handle certain challenges that the child or children may be having. Talk things over with your spouse or significant other so that your children are the ones who get the best results when things arise. Talking with your children and being open-minded gives them the opportunity to express their feelings and to build trust in you, too.

There are situations where the fathers or mothers keep the children away from the other parent as a form of punishment or control. If you are guilty of this, I ask that you find other ways to deal with your problems. Most children love both parents, and it is not fair to restrict a child from spending quality time with their other parent.

I can't say for sure that my life would have been any better having a dad around, but I would like to think so. I was very close to my dad. When he was around I was happy and felt a deep sense of security. I no longer have that.

I just remember how much he showed his love for me when he was around and I treasure that.

I even find myself at times expecting other men to be as kind as my dad was to me. This is not reality. I've learned to look for a man who actually possesses the qualities that my father had, rather than a man who should be as my dad was. I could use a few tips from him in that area of my life.

I am still single and hope to one day find someone who can be a good husband and father. I will use my experience to usher me towards this goal. I hope that I won't have to be single forever. I love the idea of having a family. Family is very important to me.

Just in case this does not happen, I would not be hopeless. I would be happy to know that I might have said something that could help someone else. Not everyone is able to be a father to their children for whatever reason or reasons. Just know that your love, commitment, and time can change someone's life in a positive way by being the best father you know how to be.



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Michigan Ability Partners: empowering self-sufficiency

by Susan Beckett

I was fooled by the name – Michigan Ability Partners (MAP) – into thinking that they were an agency serving people with disabilities. I wasn't completely wrong, but in their mission to empower people to move from hopelessness to self-sufficiency and beyond, they also serve people with a history of substance abuse, chronic homelessness, and credit problems.

Executive Director Jan Little has been with the organization since its inception as a work rehabilitation pilot program in Bridgewater 27 years ago, when Michigan was closing its psychiatric hospitals. It was run by Washtenaw County Mental Health to help former residents of the Ypsilanti Regional Psychiatric Hospital prepare for working and living in the outside world.

The organization has evolved and added services when they could not otherwise meet the needs of their clients. One major persistent shortage has been affordable housing. MAP started building their own in the 1990s. They found that even clients receiving adequate payments from Social Security were not keeping up with their rent.

Realizing that the problem was one of money management, MAP developed a payee program. The payee ensures that money goes to rent, utilities and personal needs, in that order. The client also receives counseling and assistance with credit repair. This service has recently been extended to seniors, thanks to a grant from the Blueprint on Aging. They served nearly 50 seniors last year.

"Despite handing over their money – people do have an issue with it – people appreciate having one burden taken from them," said Tiara Bealum, who is a payee and oversees the credit service. "A lot of people do tell me, 'Thank you.' They are afraid at first and have trust issues. After two to three months they see the benefits, appreciate it, and open up a bit more. I always tell them, 'Do not be afraid to ask me about your money.' I want to be as open as possible."

MAP also provides vocational rehabilitation services for veterans, along with temporary housing that allows veterans to access treatment at the Veteran's Administration (VA) hospital. There are 20 beds located in scattered site housing within four miles of the VA and on a bus line, and are available for stays of up to six weeks.

MAP provides supportive services at many of its sites, helping residents with maintaining their medication schedule and performing tasks they are unable to do for themselves. It was one of the



Torra Jones sells soups, salads and sandwiches from the Imagine That! Mobile Café.

agencies selected for the FUSE project, which aims to reduce the strain on emergency rooms and ambulance services by housing people with chronic conditions who make very frequent trips to the hospital and providing supportive services to them where they live.

MAP's innovative sweat-equity approach for the apartment buildings it owns has developed skills and pride as well as housing. Future residents built the exterior walls of the Willow Pond and Mapleview apartment buildings, using plans from the ICAN Building System. MAP set up a manufacturing facility in Manchester and used discounted strand board from Fingerle lumber to construct forms for the walls. MAP clients who were homeless at the time were employed to pour LiteCrete into the eight-inch-thick forms. The foamy LiteCrete hardened into a lightweight cement with excellent insulating properties and was amenable to handling by unskilled workers. Many of the workers were then hired by the professional subcontractors to help with laying hardwood flooring, tiling, painting and landscaping, far exceeding the eight hours per week each future tenant was required to work. Seven of the ten units in Mapleview are still occupied by people who helped build them and they continue to display pride in their work as they maintain the units in pristine condition.

"We would really like to develop more housing because there is such a need, especially for single adults," said Little.

The waiting lists for all MAP's complexes are at least 40 deep and more housing is needed badly but large increases in the costs of materials is forcing MAP to look for an alternate construction method in the coming years. One thing that won't change is

their insistence on clients being part of the construction process, as that helps address another dire need: job skills and job opportunities.

An innovative program that provides jobs is the Imagine That! Mobile Café. MAP clients enhance their culinary and sales skills, as well as their résumés, while providing fresh and healthy lunches to business people lucky enough to share their office complex on Packard, just west of Carpenter. They also cater business lunches with their standard offerings of freshly-made sandwiches, soups and salads, made from produce from the Ypsilanti Farmer's Market, when it is available.

Learning about preparing and making healthy food choices is one of the side benefits that Little sees changing lives. Preparing chicken noodle or potato vegetable soup from scratch and being judicious about the amount of added salt can change people's relationship with food. The next frontier is growing their own food, a step they will take when they locate a suitable garden plot.

Thanks to the generosity of the Crossroads Bar and Grill in Ypsilanti, the food for Imagine Café can be prepared in a commercial kitchen at no cost to the program. Crossroads allows the food cart group to use the kitchen in the morning, since the restaurant does not currently open until mid-afternoon. They are considering opening for lunch but having the Imagine Café people supply their lunch offerings.

The food cart started four years ago as a partnership with Meals on Wheels. They branched out on their own several months ago and are plowing the proceeds back into the business. Their future plans include being spun off from MAP into an independent, self-

sustaining social enterprise.

MAP's more traditional job training in the community is short-term, about 90 days of skills- and résumé-building before heading into the competitive job market. Cooperating employers include Walgreens, which hires MAP clients to package their specialty items, and the City of Ypsilanti, for whom they do neighborhood cleanup. Other area employers come to MAP for trained workers when they have openings, thereby saving themselves the trouble of advertising for and screening large numbers of applicants.

Donald has been with MAP for about nine months, following a stay at the Delonis Center. During that time he has worked for both the City of Ypsilanti and the Walgreens located near Ellsworth Road.

"My goal is getting my driver's license and I'm doing that," said Donald. "I'm going to Street Court soon and they will help me pay off my tickets. I haven't had a license since 1992. I'm going on 50 years old and I think it is about time I got a license and started being productive in society."

"I see my case manager, Rob, once a week. We each have an action plan. Mine is to stay clean, get my license and a car. Then I can hook up with my brother who has a cleaning business in Ypsilanti," he said.

Donald is one of the hundred or so participants the WISH program will work with this year. It is a HUD-funded interagency collaborative program that helps those with multiple risk factors stabilize their lives and secure housing. Donald is renting a room for \$200 per month in one of MAP's 3/4 houses. He will be able to stay there for up to two years, if he follows the rules and saves 30 percent of his income for housing elsewhere when his stay at MAP is over. He has now been substance-free for more than one year. The weekly meetings of MAP's Substance Anonymous (SA) group have played a big role in his success.

"I think the SA group helps us stay connected. We set little goals," said Donald. "Jennifer, who runs the SA, it's like she's committed to us. She can relate. It makes a difference talking to a person who has been there. She cares about us. That's the beauty of it – she really, really cares."

A non-profit, MAP relies on donations and volunteers. They are looking for assistance with everything from website development and grant writing to landscaping and organizing fundraising events. Visit their website, www.mapagency.org, to explore ways that you can help.

Fighting through depression

by an anonymous contributor

I suffer from severe depression. What follows is my story.

It's tough to pinpoint where it started. There was no triggering event for me; nothing happened to bring it on. It crept up slowly, taking its time such that I didn't even notice it happening until I was deep into it.

I was plagued by thoughts of suicide and constant apathy; I no longer took pleasure in the things I formerly enjoyed. I used to be able to read for hours on end, but now a book could barely hold my attention; I had been writing constantly for years, but then I stopped for lack of ideas. Formerly an avid gamer, games became a way to kill time rather than enjoy myself, a mindless way to pass yet another dreary day and ignore the numbness that pervaded my life. My brain didn't feel as sharp as it used to; using it for anything strenuous felt like trying to run through thick mud. Everything was clouded, dull, and dark.

The one thing I was still able to enjoy somewhat was frisbee; when I was running around out on the field, all of my troubles seemed to vanish, and there was only the game. But it was only temporary relief. The rest of my days were hellish, drained of happiness. I kept picking up knives with the intention of killing myself, but fortunately I never did.

I had always been rather hard on myself, but I took it to new heights, berating myself for virtually everything. Everything was turned into a fault or a failing on my part. I came to blame myself almost constantly. Even when I accomplished something, I would chastise myself for not doing more, or not doing a good enough job. I convinced myself that I was a disappointment and a burden to everyone, and that the world would be better off without me – so I would go for the knife, hold it for a while, then set it back down and get angry with myself for not even having the courage to kill myself.

This went on for a couple of months at least. Finally, I

forced myself to face what was happening to me and went and sought help. I started on a regimen of drugs and therapy; after a few more months, I was convinced it had worked and



that I was better. I went off the drugs and stopped going to counseling, and tried to get on with my life. And for the most part, I was able to; I had only occasional, weak thoughts of suicide, and I didn't feel quite as crushingly apathetic as before.

Then something unexpected happened: a breakup, coupled with an estrangement from my best friend. Fragile as I still was, this was enough to send me into another downward spiral, even worse than last time. I stopped caring about anyone or anything, the lone exception being the girl I had broken up with. I was unable to feel anything except anger, sadness, despair, and pain.

Alcohol proved a welcome relief when I could get it; drunkenness was the closest I could feel to happiness at that point. I focused all of my efforts on the girl, ignoring my friends and family, thinking I could just be happy again if I could convince her to be with me. For a while, I was led to believe that I had succeeded, but when it came time to make a decision, she chose to reject me yet again.

This crushed me. I cared for nobody and nothing; my days were composed entirely of varying degrees of pain ranging from horrific to unbearable. Suicide was a constant thought in my mind; for days on end, I heard voices telling me to kill myself. Convinced that I would never feel better and that I was

a horrible person who nobody would really miss, I decided to listen to the voices. I spent a few days planning my death; I had made up my mind to kill myself one Monday night, but pure chance delayed me. I struck up a conversation with a girl while waiting until the appointed hour. After talking to her for some time, I felt a bit better. I decided not to do it that night, but to wait until the next night.

I composed several suicide notes to various friends and family, including the girl I had loved and lost. I took out a knife and attempted to cut myself down the artery, but I did only superficial damage before I lost my nerve. I sat in my bed and waited, not sleeping, utterly terrified and shaken to my core. I didn't know what to do.

One of my friends contacted my family upon receiving his note; they came to see me and it was decided I should go to the hospital for in-patient therapy.

When I arrived, I was lost, confused, and angry that I was being locked up. However, in time I came to appreciate the place; I had daily therapy and a new drug regimen, and the voices telling me to kill myself stopped. I made friends there, and began the healing process with the help that I was given there. I left with a plan in place to get myself better.

Unfortunately, the plan required initiative and motivation on my part, of which I had none due to the depression. Approximately a week and a half after leaving the hospital, I made another attempt, this one at college during my senior year. I stopped myself in time yet again, and sought out help; I was rushed away from the school, never to return – they wanted no part of me after that, as they made clear later on.

I was put into a program of partial hospitalization, wherein I went to a hospital for several hours a day for therapy. Unfortunately I seemed to derive little benefit from this, and after about a week I quit the program, determined to try and get back into school. But I was stonewalled by the school administration. I had no chance to get back in; depression had cost me my final semester of college and even the ability to return. I was banned from campus, and when I formally inquired as to why, the school asserted that there was no reason for it, though I presumed it was on account of the suicide attempts. Fortunately I had sufficient credits to graduate at that point, otherwise my depression might have cost me my degree.

All the while I was fighting my way

see DEPRESSION, page 9

Case Clothed

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Rising from the ashes: Ann Arbor's controlled burns

by Francesca Lupia
Groundcover Contributor

Every spring and autumn in Ann Arbor's city parks, a small inferno scorches the green earth. Amid idyllic scenes of springtime greenery or autumn splendor, plumes of gray smoke billow into the air. Clusters of men and women in fire-retardant clothing gather in the parks and watch flames race across the ground, preying greedily on dry grasses and dead leaves as the smell of charred plants spreads through the sky. Similar blazes erupt each spring and autumn in 29 of the Ann Arbor area's city parks and nature reserves, leaving blackened and desolate patches of land in their wake.

Like a phoenix rising from the ashes, however, the plant life consumed by these fires re-emerges lusher and healthier than ever before. Within one month of their fiery demise, flowers and grasses return in full force to the charred fields, completely at odds with the strange and alarming image of a natural area in flames. The fire that, to the untrained eye, appears to threaten plant life instead constitutes "an essential ecosystem process," according to the Natural Areas Preservation (NAP) division of the Ann Arbor Parks and Recreation Department. As Ann Arbor prepares for the warm, lush months of summer, its plant life must also go through a "spring cleaning" of sorts, and the process described above, known as a "controlled burn," is one little-known but essential way in which the Parks Department's staff and volunteers help Mother Nature "get in shape" for summer.

During a controlled (or "prescribed") burn, a small plot of land is surrounded



Jason Tallant coordinates a prescribed burn at Buhr Park on April 2.

by a fire-retardant barrier (known as a "burn break") and set ablaze. To the untrained eye, the plumes of smoke that billow from burn sites may seem novel and risky. But as former NAP crew member and prescribed-burn veteran Jason Tallant explained, the practice is grounded strongly in a precedent of environmental stewardship.

"Fires historically were started by Native Americans in our region and the vegetation that occurred in these landscapes prior to European settlement was partly shaped by fire," explained Tallant in an online correspondence. "We're honoring this historic practice and using it, much in the way the local peoples did, to shape the systems we want to see flourish in the parks system."

Tallant's philosophy is based not only on a sense of environmental

stewardship, but is also rooted in local ecology. Plants native to Michigan and the Midwest, Tallant explained, rely on

wildfires (or human-made fires) to enrich their ecosystems, and have thus evolved to be hardy enough to withstand, and quickly recover from, fires. However, the invasive plants (among them, autumn olive, garlic mustard, lily-of-the-valley, and honeysuckle) that threaten the resources and habitats of native plants did not evolve under similar conditions, and are destroyed by fire. By conducting controlled burns, NAP staff and volunteers eliminate foreign competition for resources and living space, allowing native flora and fauna to thrive.

Is the abundant harvest of environmental benefits offered by controlled burns worth the risk? The dramatic billows of smoke and stark expanses of scorched land characterizing a burn site are dramatic enough to give anyone pause. But the

see BURN, page 9

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9	8				6	5		3
5					3			
4			9		1			
	9					3	5	
			8		9			
	7	8						4
			5		8			2
			6					1
6		1	7					3
								5

Fill in the squares so that each row, column, and 3-by-3 box contain the numbers 1 through 9.

Cryptoquote

UIAH MA M GMDCEZ GMDDNH SIQD

BLHFNIH KLQZ, OZD GMDDNH ELWZ

BLHFNIH M ATLQLHIME ELKZ.

— SICCFM

Kudos and Congratulations

Many Groundcover vendors look to improve their skills and employability. We'd like to congratulate those who achieved some success in their endeavors last month. The following vendors completed the Microsoft Word and Skydrive Workshop: Lonnie B., Aimee C., Shelley D., Peggy D., and Cheryl G. Peggy D. also landed a part-time landscaping job. Well done, everyone!

Groundcover Vendor Code

While Groundcover News is a nonprofit organization and newspaper vendors are considered contracted self-employers, we still have expectations of how vendors should conduct themselves while selling and representing the paper.

The following list is our Vendor Code of Conduct, which every vendor reads and signs before receiving a badge and papers. We request that if you discover a vendor violating any tenets of the Code, please contact us and provide as many details as possible. Our paper and our vendors should be positively impacting our County.

All vendors must agree to the following code of conduct:

- Groundcover News will be distributed for a voluntary donation of \$1. I agree not to ask for more than a dollar or solicit donations by any other means.
- I will only sell current issues of Groundcover News.
- I agree not to sell additional goods or products when selling the paper or to panhandle, including panhandling with only one paper.
- I will wear and display my badge when selling papers.
- I will only purchase the paper from Groundcover News Staff and will not sell to or buy papers from other Groundcov-

er News vendors, especially vendors who have been suspended or terminated.

- I agree to treat all customers, staff and other vendors respectfully. I will not "hard sell," threaten, harass or pressure customers, staff, or other vendors verbally or physically.
- I will not sell Groundcover News under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- I understand that I am not a legal employee of Groundcover News but a contracted worker responsible for my own well-being and income.
- I understand that my badge is property of Groundcover News and will not deface it. I will present my badge when purchasing the papers.
- I agree to stay off private property when selling Groundcover News.
- I understand to refrain from selling on public buses, federal property or stores unless there is permission from the owner.
- I agree to stay at least one block away from another vendor. I will also abide by the Vendor corner policy.

If you see any Groundcover News vendors not abiding by the code of conduct, please report the activity to: contact@groundcovernews.com 734-972-0926

ACROSS

1. Ballplayer's mistake
5. Measure
10. Entrance
14. Iai _____
15. China's neighbor
16. Suffix with silver or hard
17. Indeterminate quantity
18. Author Danielle
19. Cosmetics manufacturer
20. Sadness
22. _____ cobra
23. Poetic contraction
24. Futon
25. Players
29. Hope's location
34. Escape
35. _____ bee
36. Card spot
37. Dry
38. Cheerful
39. Decorative container
40. Poison _____
41. Malice _____
42. Edge closer
43. Turns on the oven
45. Plant new grass
46. Interjection
47. Pronoun
48. Agreement
50. Railroad tycoon
57. Author Gardner
58. Corrosive
59. Insurance PAC (abbr.)
60. Artist Célanne
61. Small town in central Texas
62. Overshoots the puck
63. Recedes
64. Mountain range
65. Card game

DOWN

1. Party
2. Tropical plant
3. Priest
4. European capital
5. Desires
6. Go in
7. Thought
8. Greed (German)
9. Become still

In the Cards

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
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17					18						19			
20				21							22			
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25	26	27	28			29	30	31				32	33	
34					35						36			
37					38						39			
40				41						42				
43			44					45						
		46					47							
48	49				50	51	52				53	54	55	56
57					58					59				
60					61					62				
63					64					65				

10. Get up
11. Saturday Night Live alumnus
12. Press
13. Dragon
21. Long ago
24. Prohibit
25. Greek author
26. Glasslike
27. Sandwich
28. Poem
29. Relatives
30. Actor Auberonjouis
31. Pivotal
32. Lane
33. Rex Racer's brother
35. Give up
38. Bath
39. Nobleman (abbr.)

41. Stitch
42. Viewed
44. Sleeping spots
45. Greek island
47. Express happiness
48. 1960 Cantinflas movie
49. Middle East resident
50. Twentieth century art movement
51. Computer graphic
52. Yankees infielder, for short
53. Pedestal
54. _____ rabbit
55. Intestines
56. Requirement

Puzzle by Jeff Richmond

Solutions on page 11



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Cutting dulls the emotional pain of depression

continued from page 6

back. I was thinking about suicide on average 15 times a day, then 10, then five, then less than one. Some days would be better, some worse; regression was heavily mixed in with improvement, but the latter seemed to outweigh the former. Regular therapy continued along with the drug regimen I had started at the hospital; I started to resume some of my old activities, and finding that I took some small enjoyment and satisfaction from them.

As of this writing, I am seldom plagued by thoughts of suicide, though I know that they can return at any time with a vengeance. Happiness is still something that eludes me; I'm mostly unable to feel anything but pain, anger, sadness, and shame. Sometimes I cut myself to deal with my feelings, and this will sound contradictory, but the physical pain feels good. It helps me cope with what's going on inside me; most importantly, it distracts from what's going on inside me. People may be confused as to why we cut, but it's really simple: because it feels better than the alternative.

I get angry often for no good reason,

Rising from the ashes: Ann Arbor's controlled burns


continued from page 7

NAP crew is well aware of the risks involved in "playing with fire," and the fireproof vests and plastic helmets worn by Tallant and his fellow crew members, as seen in the accompanying photograph, are only the most visible step in a complex safety procedure.

"Park neighbors," or those who live in the vicinity of burn sites, are notified of burn dates well in advance (despite the fact that unpredictable weather conditions make it difficult to create a formalized burn schedule ahead of time), and detailed "burn plans" must pass review by the City and Township fire marshals before a burn takes place. Each of the approximately twenty-nine burns conducted in each "burn season" requires a cadre of highly-trained and responsible volunteers, who take photographs, set fires, set up burn breaks, and closely monitor fire safety.

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and I'll start feeling horribly sad apropos of nothing. These feelings don't need a trigger; for me, more often than not, they just happen. I'm still haunted by memories of what happened between myself, the girl I loved, and my former best friend, from whom I'm now permanently estranged. Often I'll find myself blaming me for what happened, and that's not the only thing I blame myself for. I still constantly berate myself for underachieving, for not living up to my own impossibly

high expectations of myself. And I still have to fight the constant, crushing apathy that makes it difficult even to get out of bed in the morning.

But I do get out of bed in the morning. And I go about my day, doing things like a normal person. If you met me on the street you wouldn't know I was depressed; if you saw me among my friends, you'd never guess it – I'm the one who's always ready with a joke, who's trying to get everyone to laugh. I

which to enjoy the great outdoors. As Tallant explained, burn crews carry out the work of environmental compassion that has been an essential part of Washtenaw County's heritage for centuries. Volunteerism, explains the NAP website, fosters an "environmental ethic" in the Ann Arbor community. Participants in controlled burns learn much about the challenges facing Michigan ecosystems, and after forming an individual connection to Ann Arbor's natural spaces, many volunteers are inspired to spread their newfound commitment to ecological preservation to their friends and acquaintances.

In the words of Jason Tallant, "I will count [my time on the burn crew] as one of a few treasured experiences in my life."

Still not convinced of burn crew volunteerism's value? Consider this: there's never been a better way to make spring cleaning seem less like a chore. Once you've fought

can still pretend to be normal, but I'm not. Or maybe I am; since I've been dealing with this, I've met countless people who have been struggling with the exact same things that I have. And all of them have done their best to help each other through it and provide vital support, myself included.

I've watched them fight this, and it's given me the courage to think that maybe I can, too. I want to fight it, and I want to win. But there's no easy way to do it; this is a battle that by nature will be long, slow, and extremely painful. There will be relapses, and there will be low points, maybe times when I think that there's no way it's going to get better. But I have to think that it will, otherwise I don't stand a chance. I can't afford to look back and dwell on the past.

I've been fortunate enough to have friends and family who have been extremely supportive. Without them, I'd probably be dead right now. My heart goes out to all of them, and I am so deeply sorry for what I've put them through. But I know with them at my side, I can keep fighting. And I will win.

weeds with fire, your relationship with nature will never feel the same.

Visit NAP's website at www.a2gov.org/nap to learn more about invasive species removal opportunities.

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Trouble with the homeless

by Susan Sabo
Groundcover Contributor

*“I have trouble with the homeless,”
he said, and I said,
“That’s because you don’t know any,
Because you don’t know
Betty, who carved roses on linoleum block
And pressed them with an iron onto velvet,
And because you don’t know Tom,
Who carved the praying hands
Into guitar straps and
Stained them sepia,
And you don’t know Steven,
Who plays a waterfall of silver notes
On his scratched-by-the-summer sidewalk
ebony guitar—
You were always cared for, never raped
And never had to chase away the demons
With a bottle or prescription
And never felt the winter wind
Whip through your thin coat,
As you waited for the transport
To the shelter where you sleep
With fifteen other men,
Leaving one church in the morning
To have breakfast at another,
Then moving as a mass
To the warming center
And then back to the church
In the cycle of midwinter Michigan survival.”*



Pen and ink pointillism drawing of a Rhesus monkey, by Peggy Donham, Groundcover Vendor. (2003)

No counting her

by Susan Sabo
Groundcover Contributor

(A reflection on Peggy Donham’s article in the January 2013 issue)

*She died in front of the liquor store
In Chicago, in Detroit or in Boston
It was snowing, it was sleeting
It was raining.
She was someone’s, anyone’s daughter,
Mother, sister, wife or lover.
She was white or black, native or Asian.
She lived in the shelter, under the bridge,
Or on the street.
She was abused as a child, as a teenager,
As an adult.
She had a problem with alcohol, with meth
Or with cocaine or with mental illness.
She died of hypothermia, or hypertension
Or heart failure.
But the sad summation of her existence
Was that no one counted her
Because she had a “problem.”
And problems are not real
Unless someone counts them,
And puts them on an Excel spreadsheet
In Chicago, or Detroit, or in Boston.*

Quick Resource Guide

Washtenaw Department of Human Services
22 Center St., Ypsilanti *Phone:* (734) 481-2000
Website: www.ewashtenaw.org
Drop-in hours to meet with case worker M-F 8:00-11:00 a.m.

FOOD
Delonis Center (Shelter Association of Washtenaw County)
312 W. Huron, Ann Arbor *Phone:* (734) 662-2829
Website: www.annarborshelter.org
Free Meals M-F 12-1 p.m. & 5:30-6:30 p.m., Sat & Sun 3-4 p.m.

St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church
306 N. Division St., Ann Arbor *Phone:* (734) 663-0518
Website: www.standrewsaa.org
Breakfast 7:30-8:30 a.m. 7 days a week

Salvation Army
9 S. Park St., Ypsilanti *Phone:* (734) 482-4700
Website: www.sawashtenaw.org
Free Meals M-Th, Sat & Sun 5:00-6:00 p.m., and Wed 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

SHELTER
Housing Access Line
Phone: (734) 961-1999 M-F, 9:00 - 5:00
Centralized access to Washtenaw County shelters, information and referrals, eviction prevention and housing relocation assistance.
Drop-in hours on Wednesday from 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. at Ozone House, 102 N. Hamilton, Ypsilanti

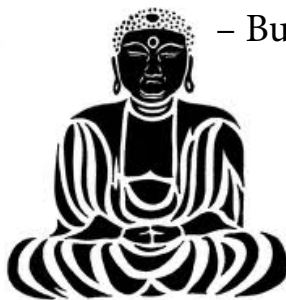
Project Outreach Team (PORT)
110 N. 4th Ave., Ann Arbor *Phone:* (734) 222-3750
Website: www.a2port.org
Provides outreach, assistance and treatment to homeless individuals

MEDICAL
Hope Medical Clinic
103 Arnet St., Ypsilanti *Phone:* (734) 481-0111
Website: www.thehopeclinic.org
Non-profit organization offering general medicine and pediatric care for uninsured

Packard Health
3174 Packard, Ann Arbor *Phone:* (734) 971-1073
Website: www.packardclinic.org
Non-profit organization offering preventative medicine, family medicine, immunizations, etc.
West Location: 501 N. Maple, Ann Arbor *Phone:* (734) 926-4900


Cryptoquote Solution

Just as a candle cannot burn
without fire, men cannot live
without a spiritual life.
– Buddha



9	8	2	4	7	6	5	1	3
5	1	6	2	8	3	7	9	4
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7	4	3	5	1	8	9	6	2
8	5	9	6	3	2	4	7	1
6	2	1	7	9	4	8	3	5

B	A	L	K		W	E	I	G	H		A	D	I	T
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E	B	B	S			A	N	D	E	S		S	K	A



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Chicken Fajitas



by Lisa Sonnenburg

Serves 4

- 8 large tortilla shells or lavash bread
- 2 large boneless, skinless chicken breasts, sliced into strips
- ¼ cup vegetable oil
- ½ cup red wine vinegar
- 1 tsp chili powder
- 1 tsp oregano
- ½ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp pepper
- 1 red pepper, sliced into strips
- 1 green pepper, sliced into strips
- 1 onion, sliced
- 1 cup chopped fresh mushrooms
- 1 cup shredded lettuce
- 1 cup shredded cheese
- 1 cup salsa
- ½ cup tzaziki (greek yogurt dip) or sour cream

Preheat oven to 350°. Wrap tortillas/lavash bread in aluminum foil and put in oven for 15 minute.

Combine oil, vinegar, chili powder, oregano, salt and pepper in a small bowl.

Heat a large skillet or wok on medium-high heat and add oil and vinegar mixture and chicken. Stir fry chicken until cooked through.

Remove chicken from skillet/wok and place on plate or pan. Keep warm.

Stir-fry onions and mushrooms for 3-4 minutes, then add peppers and stir fry for another 1-2 minutes.

Remove tortillas/lavash bread from oven.

On separate plates, place tortillas, vegetables and chicken, along with bowls of lettuce, cheese, salsa and tzaziki/sour cream on table.

Open tortilla on a plate and add chicken, vegetables, lettuce, salsa, cheese and sour cream/tzaziki. Fold both side of tortilla inwards, and fold one end to close.

Enjoy!

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1/2	\$299.95	\$399.95	5 X 14 or 10 X 6.5
Full Page	\$495.95	\$669.95	10 X 14

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